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25X1A

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Austria

DATE DISTR. 17 May 1949

SUBJECT Further Details Concerning Plans for
Communist-Inspired Demonstration

NO. OF PAGES 1

PLACE [REDACTED] 25X1C
ACQUIREDNO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)DATE OF INFO. [REDACTED] 25X1A
25X1XSUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO. [REDACTED] 25X1A

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288

1. Sixty truck loads of Zistersdorf-Werkschutz members, about 2,000 men, some armed with rifles, are to be transported in Soviet-licensed trucks to Vienna the morning of 17 May 1949 to take part in the Communist-inspired demonstration planned for that date. These troops will then march from Floridsdorf (Vienna XXI) to Vienna I.
2. [REDACTED] 25X1A has indicated that the Central Committee has not yet approved Werkschutz participation in the demonstration. Although this participation was discussed in a meeting on 13 May, no decision was reached. Communist leaders Franz Honner and Dr. Heinrich Duermeyer are urging participation.
3. The Werkschutz had rifle practice in mid-May at the Zistersdorf range. Targets allegedly were life-sized caricatures of Figl, Schaerf, Helmer, and Graf.*
4. It is reported that the 10 May demonstration was poorly handled by the police. Newspaper reports are fairly accurate, including an estimate of thirty-five policemen injured by the crowd. The refusal to allow policemen to defend themselves with truncheons or other arms had a very damaging effect on police morale. Most of the 2,000 participating policemen were taken from special reserve student police who are kept on hand at Rossauerlaende barracks as an anti-putsch defense. These men are partially trained, reside in barracks, but are not full-fledged police. Source feels that the Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Lehmann, showed bad leadership and lack of proper decision.**

25X1A* [REDACTED] Comment: Paragraphs 1-3 are possibly to be regarded as rumor, but they are included for whatever value they may have. The prognostication [REDACTED] 25X1A is more reasonable, especially in light of the 10 May demonstration, where the Communists mustered 5,000 demonstrators who are said to have dwindled to 2,500 the moment trouble started. Extensive armed violence by the Communists is viewed as unlikely, as it seems premature until their strength has been further tested and the situation has developed further.

25X1A** [REDACTED] Comment: Oskar Helmer, Minister of the Interior, made a public statement after the demonstration that in the future, police would defend themselves by all legally authorized means.

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NO CHANGE in Class. ☐

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